Visa rules of America

†1849. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that business tours of our countrymen are getting adversely affected due to stringent visa rules in America;

(b) if so, whether Government would propose to take any steps to make available the said visa easily and expeditiously to the persons interested to visit America for business and tour purpose; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Visa regulations are in the domain of the State issuing visas. According to data obtained from the US Embassy in India, there has been a steady increase in the number of visa issued to Indians by the US Embassy and its Consulates in India. In 2003 (US fiscal year-October to September), 2.77 lakh non-immigrant visas were issued to Indians. This increased to 3.047 lakhs in 2004 and further to 3.138 lakhs in 2005. US Embassy has also reported reduction in visa processing time due to a series of measures taken in 2006. In addition, there is a Business Executive Programme run by the US Embassy. Businesses registered under this programme get the benefit of facilitated and expedited visa procedures.

Trilateral talks of India, Russia and China

1850. DR. P. C. ALEXANDER: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the main objective of the trilateral talks between India, Russia and China which have been conducted at the level of Heads of Governments and the Foreign Ministers;

(b) whether any specific areas of co-operation among the three countries have been identified in the recent talks held at Delhi at the Foreign Ministers level; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action proposed to be taken on them?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.